



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA'S STORYTELLING WORKSHOP SERIES,
THE OPERA IN YOU, CULMINATES WITH FREE PUBLIC EVENT

THE OPERA IN YOU: SEASON FINALE SHOWCASE

APRIL 22 AT THE GREEN ROOM, VETERANS BUILDING



The Opera in You workshop participants Cheong Yong, Zaya Be and Renee Reid;
The Opera in You Program Facilitator Corey Rosen (far right); Photos: Kristen Loken

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (April 6, 2023) — San Francisco Opera's free storytelling workshop series, *The Opera in You*, a new program offered during the Company's current Centennial Season, culminates with a free public storytelling event, *The Opera in You: Season Finale Showcase*, on Saturday, April 22 at 2 p.m. at the Green Room in the Veterans Building.

Approximately a dozen selected storytellers, all of whom participated in at least one of the three 5-week sessions of the *The Opera in You* series, will read their five-minute stories in front of an in-person audience. Each story is based on the personal experiences of the storyteller, ranging from a woman moving to San Francisco in the 1960s to a mother saving coins and providing for her children and a young man sneaking into tenor Luciano Pavarotti's dressing room at the War Memorial Opera House.

The showcase will be hosted by *The Opera in You* Program Facilitator Corey Rosen and features a spoken work performance by San Francisco Poet Laureate Tongo Eisen-Martin and songs performed by San Francisco Opera Chorus member and mezzo-soprano Erin Neff and pianist Cole Thomason-Redus. Immediately following the showcase, all audience members are invited to join the storytellers for a reception in the Green Room.

Storytelling is an essential component of opera and *The Opera in You* offers individuals, no matter their age or background, an opportunity to develop their personal stories with experienced writing coaches and teachers. The goal of the series is for participants to develop storytelling skills while becoming comfortable telling a five-minute story in front of a live audience.

The Opera in You participant Cheong Yong said: "*The Opera in You* workshops have been a journey of self-discovery. I have learned how to pour the jumble of thoughts and memories from my head into a stream of words and then to edit them effectively for powerful storytelling. I have taken the workshops twice and found that each instructor brought their own unique passion, experiences and skills to teach us something different, in engaging ways, at every session. From my workshop classmates, I have learned each of us has poignant stories which deserve to be told and shared. Their stories are a reflection of our unique rich culture and our wonderfully diverse community in San Francisco."

Program Facilitator Corey Rosen said: "Storytelling connects everyone, regardless of economics, ethnicity or any other societal constructs. *The Opera in You* has enabled a wide cross section of the San Francisco community to come together, share their stories and become better storytellers. I feel incredibly lucky to have been recruited by San Francisco Opera to help curate a curriculum that could be used across multiple library sites over multiple weeks to inspire people to tell their stories, and I am so grateful to the San Francisco Public Library for opening its doors to our city's people and creating spaces for them to tell their own stories. I've loved hearing 'The Opera' in each student and seeing them open their hearts to each other."

San Francisco Public Library Chief of Community Programs & Partnerships Michelle Jeffers said: "San Francisco Public Library has been so grateful for the partnership that brought *The Opera in You* creative writing workshops to our neighborhood branch libraries through the fall and winter. We always strive to bring engaging programs to our libraries so seeing the creativity and desire for our library users to have a chance to be part of this historic program has been a joy to behold."

San Francisco Opera's Department of Diversity, Equity and Community and San Francisco Public Library led and organized the three sessions of storytelling workshops that took place from September 2022 to March 2023 at 14 library branches and online with a total of 109 participants. The professional writing coaches and teachers of *The Opera in You* series were *The Opera in You* Program Facilitator Corey Rosen, Christian Wilburn, David Rodriguez, F.T. Kola, Nicole Apostol Bruno, Patricia Cotter and Sara Marinelli. Dr. Charles "Chip" Mc Neal was *The Opera in You* program designer and consultant.

For more information about the *The Opera in You: Season Finale Showcase* on April 22, visit sfoopera.com/operainyou.

For Calendar Editors

WHAT: San Francisco Opera's free storytelling workshop series, *The Opera in You*, a new program offered during the Company's Centennial Season, culminates with a free, public storytelling event, *The Opera in You: Season Finale Showcase*. Approximately a dozen selected storytellers from *The Opera in You* workshops will read their five-minute stories based on the personal experiences of the storyteller.

The showcase will be hosted by *The Opera in You* Program Facilitator Corey Rosen and features a spoken word performance by San Francisco Poet Laureate Tongo Eisen-Martin and songs performed by San Francisco Opera Chorus member and mezzo-soprano Erin Neff and pianist Cole Thomason-Redus. Immediately following the showcase, all audience members are invited to join the storytellers for a reception in

the Green Room.

TICKETS: FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, no tickets required (registration is not required but encouraged: sfopera.com/operainyou)

DATE: Saturday, April 22, 2-3:45 p.m. (doors open at 1:30 p.m.).
All attendees are invited to a reception in the Green Room following the showcase.

WHERE: The Green Room, Veterans Building, 401 Van Ness Avenue, 2nd floor, San Francisco, CA 94102

San Francisco Opera is sponsored, in part, by Norby Anderson, Jerome L. and Thao N. Dodson, The Dolby Family, Carol and Dixon Doll, Bertie Bialek Elliott, Peter Fenton and Kate Greer, Keith and Priscilla Geeslin, Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation for the Arts, John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn, Burgess and Elizabeth Jamieson, Franklin and Catherine Johnson, Edmund W. and Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Fund, Steven M. Menzies, Bernard and Barbro Osher, Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem, Dianne and Tad Taube, Phyllis C. Wattis Endowment Funds, Diane B. Wilsey, and Barbara A. Wolfe.

Yamaha is the official piano of San Francisco Opera.

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